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## KINSHIP IN THE BRITISH BALLADS: THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

by WILLIAM E. SELLERS

THE SOCIAL UNITS of family and kindred seem to be of primary importance in many of the ballads in Child's text. To the modern audience, there is much that seems strange in the ballads of kinship: the family group which they portray often lives in an intense intimacy, with loves, jealousies, and resentments heightened beyond expectation. Violent and catastrophic incidents are common: lovers suffer and die in the shadow of family rivalry and restraint; older brothers and sisters resent with brutal rancor the slightest breach of their "honor" or of their authority; revenges, both within the family and against outsiders, are frequent.

Among the earliest critics to take note of the special qualities of the ballads of kinship was Francis B. Gummere. "Domestic complication, in the widest range of the term," he observed, "furnishes a theme for the majority of the English and Scottish ballads."<sup>1</sup> Though Gummere's appreciation of the literary qualities of these ballads was keen, some of his insights were colored by an anthropological outlook that has since his time been largely discredited. Following the lead of nineteenth-century folklorists, he saw in many traits of the ballads "survivals" of a remote, though indefinite, prehistoric past. At some "primitive" stage of culture, he believed, the individual was submerged in the tribe, which Gummere thought of as an organism in almost a biological sense, held together firmly by ties of blood made sacred by ritual and belief. The "singing and dancing throng" itself was the original ballad-maker, and spontaneous communal composition was the source of the ballad or at least of its prototype.<sup>2</sup> The totemic clan was the ideal

<sup>1</sup>Francis Barton Gummere, *The Popular Ballad* (Boston, 1907), p. 145.

<sup>2</sup>Francis Barton Gummere, "Primitive Poetry and the Ballad," *MP*, I (1903), 388-398; *Old English Ballads* (Boston, 1894), p. lxxxiii; *The Popular Ballad*, pp. 22, 169, *et passim*.

matrix of folklore in this scheme of things, and attempts to find traces of totemic belief in folklore and balladry have not altogether ceased since Gummere's time.<sup>3</sup>

Such a viewpoint presupposes a fairly uniform evolution of human society from a general "primitive" state through a rather standardized series of stages, one of the earliest being the "matriarchate." The occasional occurrence of matrilineal clans in savage society was taken as the key to the problem of the familial matron of the ballads. This formidable being, "stark and stour" in her authority over her sons and daughters-in-law, clearly represented the matriarch of some prehistoric era.<sup>4</sup> And the "sister's son," that stock figure of the ballads, was cited as further evidence of a mother-centered society.<sup>5</sup>

Although literary critics have not yet completely abandoned the totems of tribalism and matriarchy,<sup>6</sup> anthropologists working in modern inductive disciplines have discarded the notion of a series of stages of social evolution taking place in a universal pattern in all human societies. "As soon as we admit," writes Boas, "that the hypothesis of a uniform evolution has to be proved before it can be accepted, the whole structure loses its foundation."<sup>7</sup> And in a recent essay, J. H. Steward sums up the results of many investigations which indicate that particular cultures show wide divergence from one another and do not show signs of unilinear evolution.<sup>8</sup> In recent years, therefore, the search for "survivals" of an indefinite past has been largely abandoned, and the "matriarchate" has suffered the fate of other stages in the evolutionary scheme.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup>See, for example, George Lawrence Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science* (London, 1908), p. xiv; Lowry C. Wimberly, *Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads* (Chicago, 1928), pp. 66-67.

<sup>4</sup>Gummere, "The Mother-in-Law," in *Anniversary Papers, by Colleagues and Pupils of George Lyman Kittredge*, ed. F. N. Robinson, W. A. Neilson, and E. S. Sheldon (Boston, 1913), pp. 17-24.

<sup>5</sup>Gummere, "The Sister's Son," in *An English Miscellany, Presented to Dr. Furnivall in Honour of his Seventy-fifth Birthday*, ed. W. P. Ker, A. S. Napier, and W. W. Skeat (Oxford, 1901), pp. 133-149; *The Popular Ballad*, pp. 182-191.

<sup>6</sup>See, for example, Evelyn K. Wells, *The Ballad Tree* (New York, 1950), pp. 79-80; Wimberly, *Folklore*, p. 205; M. J. C. Hodgart, *The Ballads* (London, 1950), p. 136.

<sup>7</sup>Franz Boas, "The Methods of Ethnology," in *Race, Language, and Culture* (New York, 1940), p. 281.

<sup>8</sup>Julian H. Steward, "Evolution and Process," in *Anthropology Today*, ed. A. L. Kroeber (Chicago, 1953), p. 324.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Robert H. Lowie, *Primitive Society* (New York, 1920), p. 189.

Folklorists have advanced a further objection against the notion of "survivals": many of the motifs of the ballads, like those of folktales, are so widely diffused that they cannot serve as indices of specific customs and beliefs in definite areas at definite times, even if some motifs are grounded in custom and belief.<sup>10</sup>

Gummere's views have encountered further opposition from those who have questioned his theory of ballad origins. The hypothesis of communal origins has fared badly in recent years.<sup>11</sup> Though there are still some arguments for early origins of some kind of popular narrative song, most of the British ballads as they are known today can be traced back with confidence no further than the later Middle Ages. Chambers, whose wide acquaintance with medieval literature gives his opinions some weight, does not recognize any unimpeachably "popular" ballads from manuscripts of earlier date than 1450.<sup>12</sup> Manuscripts, of course, give no terminal date for seekers of origins in oral tradition; but it has been pointed out that historical references do not indicate composition much before the fifteenth century,<sup>13</sup> and that some of the Scottish ballads of domestic tragedy and feud "belong, when they can be dated, to the sixteenth and still more to the seventeenth century. Two are of the eighteenth."<sup>14</sup>

In spite of the difficulties of locating the ballads historically, in spite of the dearth of accurate information about the details of medieval domestic arrangements, and in spite even of current objections to historical reconstructions of the usual sort, whatever can be said in the light of available evidence and of informed scholarly opinion about the social bases of the ballads of kinship should have some interest and value for the student of folklore. Enough historical material is available for an investigation within broad limits of probability.

In the absence of certainty about the time of origin of the British ballads, the search for relevant historical data must cover an extensive

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Alexander Haggerty Krappe, *The Science of Folk-lore* (London, 1930), p. 8; Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (New York, 1946), p. 388. See also Gene E. Murokoff, "Whole Tale Parallels of the Child Ballads as Cited or Given by Child or in FFC 74," *JAF*, LXIV (April-June, 1951), 203-206.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Louise Pound, *Poetic Origins and the Ballad* (New York, 1921), pp. 1-9; Sigurd B. Hustvedt, *Ballad Books and Ballad Men* (Cambridge, Mass., 1930), pp. 8-13.

<sup>12</sup>Sir Edmund K. Chambers, *English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1947), p. 153. Cf. William P. Ker, "On the History of the Ballads, 1100-1500," in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, IV (1910), 8.

<sup>13</sup>Hodgart, p. 70.

<sup>14</sup>Chambers, p. 168.

area. Two general considerations can serve as guides, however: (1) the main line of development of the social history of the Middle Ages has reflected somewhat the tendencies of political and social theory of recent times; and (2) the current of informed opinion has moved away from the simplified pattern of tribal-communal origins of medieval social institutions. In the atmosphere of aroused nationalism, nineteenth-century historians debated Romanist and Germanist theories of the beginnings of medieval institutions;<sup>15</sup> later investigators, under the spell of the concept of biological evolution and sometimes of scientific determinism, saw medieval society evolving from the communal life of the clan.<sup>16</sup> The evident parallel between the tribal-communal school and Gummere's theory of the early ballad-making community is probably not merely coincidental.

With the maturing of the discipline, however, medieval studies became less romantic, more critical, and more objectively inductive in method and spirit. Since the last decade of the nineteenth century, historians have modified the communal-tribal theory considerably, and responsible contemporary historians have largely rejected it for lack of clear evidence.<sup>17</sup> That there was sporadic, practically useful, cooperation among the peasants of the early Middle Ages is not unlikely; but this cooperation cannot be reduced to a universal tribal communism; the medieval manor probably did not grow out of the tribal equivalent of the collective farm.<sup>18</sup>

In Britain specifically, the Anglo-Saxons evidently did not long retain the organized kindred as an important unit of social structure. Whether because the mass migration to a new homeland broke up whatever kindreds existed<sup>19</sup> or because the larger units of the monarchy and the aristocracy had superseded or were superseding the kindred

<sup>15</sup>Cf. Alfons Dopsch, *The Economic and Social Foundations of European Civilization*, trans. M. G. Beard and Marshall (London, 1937), pp. 1-21; Sir Paul Vinogradoff, *Villainage in England* (London, 1892), pp. 16-19.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Dopsch, p. 105; Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, p. 19. See Frederic Seebohm, *The Tribal System in Wales*, 2nd ed. (London, 1904), pp. v-xxvii, 86, for explicit reference to "the comparative method."

<sup>17</sup>See Frederic W. Maitland, *Township and Borough* (Cambridge, 1898), p. 20; George C. Homans, *English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1941), p. 72.

<sup>18</sup>See Dopsch, p. 34; Ephraim Lipson, *The Economic History of England, Vol. I: The Middle Ages*, 7th ed. (London, 1937), pp. 74-75; Henry S. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor* (Cambridge, 1937), pp. 44-46.

<sup>19</sup>Cf. Bertha S. Phillpotts, *Kindred and Clan in the Middle Ages and After* (Cambridge, 1913), p. 265; Sir Paul Vinogradoff, *The Growth of the Manor*, 2nd ed. (London, 1904), pp. 145-146.

as a functioning socio-political order,<sup>20</sup> there is little evidence that the *maegth* — in the sense of fully-developed kindred-organization, at least — played any major part in early English history. Legal documents, for instance, do not specify clearly the extent of the kindred involved in wergilds, as do the documents of societies in which kindreds are strong and significant.<sup>21</sup> And the wergild itself loses its importance rather early.<sup>22</sup> The kindred had its role in the supporting of oaths in court; but before King Alfred's time, a defendant had to produce oath-helpers who were not kinsmen.<sup>23</sup> Frankpledge, from this time onward, progressively replaced kinship as a means of protection and as an assurance of good behavior.<sup>24</sup> And the laws of the Anglo-Saxon kings do not show great regard for extended familial arrangements relating to property.<sup>25</sup>

In Celtic society, on the other hand, there is evidence of a different state of affairs. The kindred was an active administrative unit in Wales until the manorial system superseded it: there is a good record in the documents of the Honour of Denbigh of the imposition of the manorial system on Welsh tribalism, in which kinship to the fourth degree of descent was clearly the central basis of social and economic organization,<sup>26</sup> and kinship to the ninth degree occasionally had legal significance.<sup>27</sup> In Ireland, the peasantry to this day cling to certain customs affecting the kin-group, and a man's "friends" are his kinsmen in a group reckoned back for from five to seven generations.<sup>28</sup> The Scottish clan has long flourished as an association founded on the blood-tie, though the claims of clansmen to the ancient origin and purity of descent of particular clans may be questioned.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Cf. Lipson, I, 22; George O. Sayles, *The Medieval Foundations of England*, 2nd ed. (London, 1950), p. 123; Dopsch, p. 173.

<sup>21</sup>See Sir Frank M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1947), p. 312.

<sup>22</sup>See Vinogradoff, *Growth of the Manor*, p. 133; Phillipps, pp. 206-213.

<sup>23</sup>See Stenton, pp. 312-313; Phillipps, pp. 232-233; Lipson, I, 19.

<sup>24</sup>See Vinogradoff, *Manor*, p. 146; Lipson, I, 19.

<sup>25</sup>See Stenton, pp. 313-314.

<sup>26</sup>See Seeböhm, *Tribal System*, pp. vii-viii, 76, 89, 91, 122; Vinogradoff, *Manor*, p. 21; Vinogradoff and Frank Morgan, *Survey of the Honour of Denbigh, 1334* (London, 1914), pp. xxii-xxiv.

<sup>27</sup>See Seeböhm, *Tribal System*, pp. xxxii-xxxiii, 80; Vinogradoff, *Manor*, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup>See Conrad M. Arensberg and Solon T. Kimball, *Family and Community in Ireland* (Cambridge, Mass., 1940), pp. 75-96.

<sup>29</sup>Cf. Vinogradoff, *Manor*, p. 14. See William C. Mackenzie, *The Highlands and Isles of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1937), p. 87, for some honest doubts about clan origins.

Whatever the state of kindreds in the British Isles may have been prior to the full development of feudalism, it is generally acknowledged that kinship had undergone considerable attrition in England and in much of Scotland by the time the surviving British ballads were probably coming into being. The effect of feudal organization on clans and kindreds was bound to be disruptive, since the rulers and benefactors of the feudal order were in a position to assert their claims over those of other individuals and groups. The essential feudal relationship, founded on homage and customary service, was the normal one in medieval Europe; and at the base of the pyramid, the manor was the prevailing social unit.<sup>30</sup>

In typically feudalized areas, such as the "champion" country of central England, the convenience of the lord of the manor and the efficient administration of the manorial economy called for certain basic land units which could not be subdivided indefinitely or held by fluctuating and indefinite groups; each cottar or villein could be held responsible for certain standard dues and services governed by the size of his holding.<sup>31</sup> Inheritance in such cases was impartible; the holding went to the oldest son or in rarer cases to the youngest, and the other sons of the former tenant were obliged to shift for themselves if they were to become heads of families.<sup>32</sup> The daughters, of course, married out of the family and settled on their husbands' holdings. The nuclear family was thus the standard unit of kinship-organization in developed manorial society; this stem-family (*Le Play's famille-souche*) became prevalent in England and in much of feudal Europe.<sup>33</sup> There were some ties of loyalty between brothers and sisters, but the formation of organized kindreds of any effectual sort under this system was highly unlikely.<sup>34</sup>

In this basic family unit, the major lines of relationship were fairly well defined. The parents were in theory and often in effect the rulers of the household. Children were supposed to obey both parents, though the father was the higher authority; daughters especially might come

<sup>30</sup>Cf. Lipson, I, 62; Vinogradoff, *Manor*, pp. 32-33; George M. Trevelyan, *History of England* (London, 1926), pp. 213-215; Frederic Seehoff, *The English Village Community* (London, 1883), p. 86.

<sup>31</sup>Bennett, *Manor*, pp. 255-256; cf. Vinogradoff, *Manor*, p. 204.

<sup>32</sup>Bennett, *Manor*, pp. 255-256; Homans, pp. 117-120. See Homans, pp. 123-124 for ultimogeniture or "Borough English."

<sup>33</sup>Homans, p. 119. Cf. Carle C. Zimmerman and Merle E. Frampton, *Family and Society* (New York, 1935), pp. 122-123.

<sup>34</sup>See Homans, pp. 215-218.

to grief if they refused to obey, even if the demands made upon them might in modern society be considered unreasonable.<sup>35</sup> The treatment of Elizabeth Paston at as late a date as 1454 is a notorious example of harshness in parents who were not considered exceptionally brutal in other connections:

For she was never in so great sorrow as she is now-a-days, for she may not speak with any man, whosoever come, ne not see nor speak with my man, nor with servants of her mother's, but that she beareth her an hand otherwise than she meaneth; and she hath since Easter the most part been beaten once in the week or twice, and sometimes twice on a day, and her head broken in two or three places.<sup>36</sup>

That this treatment was somewhat extreme even for those times, however, may be deduced from the solicitude shown by Elizabeth's aunt and by her extenuation of the mother's behavior — "for sorrow often-time causeth women to beset them otherwise than they should do" — and by her instructions to John Paston to burn the letter — "for and my cousin your mother knew that I had sent this letter, she should never love me."<sup>37</sup> And corporal punishment was thought salutary in many cases where it might not be approved of today; Agnes Paston instructs Clement's tutor to "belash him till he will amend; and so did his last master, and the best that he ever had at Cambridge."<sup>38</sup> But it would be a mistake to picture the parents of those days as mere Squire Westerns: the records of lawsuits between parents and children who had come of age give sufficient evidence of lasting bitterness and occasional rebellion.<sup>39</sup>

Elizabeth Paston's troubles were largely over marriage arrangements, and in this respect also her case was symptomatic. A girl's preference might be consulted, but custom did not give it much weight. Marriages were frequently arranged, sometimes before the children were old enough to have a preference, and often without regard to other considerations than those of property.<sup>40</sup> The daughters of the very

<sup>35</sup>See Trevelyan, p. 260; William S. Davis, *Life on a Medieval Barony* (New York, 1923), p. 74; Henry S. Bennett, *The Pastons and their England* (Cambridge, 1951), pp. 71-78.

<sup>36</sup>Elizabeth Clere to John Paston, June 29, 1454, in John Fenn, *Paston Letters*, ed. A. Ramsay, 2 vols. (London, 1849), I, 49-50.

<sup>37</sup>Agnes Paston to London (recipient unknown), January 28, 1457, Fenn, I, 82-83.

<sup>38</sup>Bennett, *The Pastons*, p. 75.

<sup>39</sup>Homans, pp. 161-163, 174; Trevelyan, pp. 260-261; George G. Coulton, *Chaucer and his England*, 6th ed. (London, 1937), pp. 204-205, 210.

poor probably had more freedom of choice within the limited sphere that was open to them than had the children of other groups.<sup>40</sup>

By analogy with the Biblical patriarch and by virtue of his legal responsibility as head of the household as well as his recognized right to use his superior physical strength, the father was normally thought of as the ruler of the family.<sup>41</sup> Since women were minors before the law, their rights were limited.<sup>42</sup> The woman's dower was not to exceed one third of her husband's real estate at the time of the marriage, and the wife had no control over the management of the dower during the husband's lifetime.<sup>43</sup> These laws were modified in the course of time, however, from the thirteenth century onward, so that a widow might inherit the whole estate of the husband.<sup>44</sup> In villeinage, the whole tenement went to the widow; in other cases a third and sometimes a half.<sup>45</sup> A widow's "free bench" — originally a bench at the family hearth, but later an inclusive legal term — entitled her to at least a portion of the estate as long as she remained chaste and unmarried, though the belief that a man was needed to manage the holding often led to remarriage, sometimes by order of the lord of the manor.<sup>46</sup>

Extensions of kinship counted, even under feudalism, in two connections. One was social status. The production of two or more male kinsmen of a serf in court was taken as legal evidence of his status.<sup>47</sup> The more important connection, to the land-owning classes, was that of political and economic affluence, which could be augmented by alliances of blood and marriage.<sup>48</sup> Feuds among powerful family groups were in evidence on the continent as late as the thirteenth century,<sup>49</sup> and in scattered localities in Britain, borough records show that degrees of involvement in violence and manslaughter on the part of kinsmen persisted.<sup>50</sup> Such instances do not serve as evidence of organized kindreds of the tribal type, however; family groups, including some col-

<sup>40</sup>See Bennett, *The Pastons*, p. 51.

<sup>41</sup>Davis, *Medieval Barony*, pp. 74-79, 98-101; Trevelyan, p. 260.

<sup>42</sup>Davis, p. 74.

<sup>43</sup>Willystine Goodsell, *A History of Marriage and the Family*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1934), pp. 225-226.

<sup>44</sup>Goodsell, p. 226.

<sup>45</sup>Bennett, *Manor*, pp. 251-252.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*; cf. Homans, pp. 180-188; Davis, p. 74.

<sup>47</sup>Bennett, *Manor*, pp. 310-314; Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>48</sup>Davis, p. 98; Coulton, *Chaucer*, p. 202.

<sup>49</sup>Marc Bloch, *La Société féodale: la formation des liens de dépendance* (Paris, 1939), p. 196.

<sup>50</sup>See Mary Bateson, ed., *Borough Customs* (London, 1904), I, 30-31.

lateral relatives, and, in the upper classes, retainers, were undoubtedly involved in the vendettas and contests for power that occasionally took place. In periods of disruption such as those of the fifteenth century, families like the Pastons and their rivals made what use they could of real or supposed relationships with people of influence.

Kinship played a minor role in connection with exogamy. The ban against marriage within certain degrees of kindred proved difficult to enforce, and the discovery or the claim of relationship within the forbidden degrees was sometimes a convenient way to obtain an annulment.<sup>51</sup>

Since many of the British ballads are of Scottish origin or have passed through Scottish tradition, the question of the kindred in Scotland is important for the present study. Unfortunately, there is not so much evidence about Scottish social structures, especially in the formative years, as there is about Welsh society in comparable times. Historians following the "comparative method" are tempted to take up Seehoehm's suggestion that Welsh institutions throw much light on Scottish social history.<sup>52</sup> On such an assumption, evolution from what has been called tribalism, with its marked structure of kin-ties regulating rights to the produce of the land and its emphasis on the rights of kinsmen to the fourth degree to certain "tribal" areas rather than on individual ownership of definite tracts of land<sup>53</sup> would be a fairly continuous, organic, development.<sup>54</sup> Evidence of such a continuity is slight, however; the resemblance between Welsh and Scottish treatment of the rights of "strangers in blood" to hold land as cited by Seehoehm<sup>55</sup> is not conclusive, since similar conditions apply to villein tenure and status under manorial conditions,<sup>56</sup> and the fourth-generation limit is probably the most practical one to recognize in the absence of detailed genealogical records.

Inheritance in the strictly male line is also considered a Celtic trait, and there is some evidence of a preference for the male line in Scottish

<sup>51</sup>Bennett, *Manor*, p. 245; Coulton, *Chaucer*, p. 205; Davis, pp. 101-102.

<sup>52</sup>*Tribal System*, pp. 128-130.

<sup>53</sup>*Tribal System*, pp. vii-viii, 89-91.

<sup>54</sup>See, for example, William F. Skene, *The Highlanders of Scotland* (Stirling, 1902), I, 100; William Cunningham, "Differences of Economic Development in England and Scotland," *Scot. Hist. Rev.* XIII (Jan. 1916), 177.

<sup>55</sup>*Tribal System*, pp. 128-129.

<sup>56</sup>Bennett, *Manor*, p. 314, n. 1; Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, p. 143.

lineages;<sup>57</sup> but there were exceptions to this rule also,<sup>58</sup> and the need for male leadership in warlike times may explain the preference more cogently than the persistence of custom. Likewise, the institution of tanystry, which resembles the Welsh system, based on descent from a common ancestor rather than on the direct line of father-to-son inheritance,<sup>59</sup> was not universal, even among Highlanders. "Stern necessity rather than old tradition," says Miss Grant, "seems to have influenced the Highlanders when they departed from the accepted laws and customs of Scotland."<sup>60</sup>

The inroads of Norse invaders on Scottish territories probably had some areas. In any case, clan organization seems to have been a revival again. A much stronger threat to Celtic social arrangements was Anglo-Norman feudalism. From the twelfth century onward, feudal institutions were sanctioned and encouraged throughout the kingdom: the reign of King David, as Trevelyan says, "laid the impress of Norman ruling families on Scottish society and religion."<sup>61</sup> Feudal land tenure became the rule in the Lowlands generally; the feudalization of the Western Lowlands was fairly complete by the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>62</sup> The effect of feudal ideas on official administration policy and on legal theory was far-reaching.<sup>63</sup>

Feudalism in Scotland was not an exact copy of the English pattern, of course,<sup>64</sup> but such exceptions as historians have noted may be regarded as variations on a prevailingly feudal pattern and are hardly conclusive as evidence of a persistence of arrangements based on tribalism. "How far any vestiges of tribal land-holding survived in the Low-

<sup>57</sup>Skene, I, 104; cf. James Logan, *The Scottish Gael*, 5th ed. (Hartford Conn., 1847), p. 132.

<sup>58</sup>See Isabel Frances Grant, *The Social and Economic Development of Scotland before 1603* (Edinburgh and London, 1930), p. 521.

<sup>59</sup>See Logan, p. 132; Frank Adam, *The Clans, Septs, and Regiments of the Scottish Highlands*, 4th ed., revised by Sir Thomas Innes of Learney (Edinburgh, 1952), pp. 33, 110.

<sup>60</sup>Page 521. Cf. Alexander Conrady, *Geschichte der Clanverfassung in den schottischen Hochländern* (Leipzig, 1898), p. 19.

<sup>61</sup>*History of England*, p. 121; cf. pp. 213-216; see also Grant, pp. 18-19; James Alan Rennie, *In the Steps of the Clansmen* (London, 1951), pp. 29-30.

<sup>62</sup>See Trevelyan, p. 217; Vinogradoff, *Manor*, p. 32-33.

<sup>63</sup>See Grant, pp. 25-30; cf. p. 64: "In Scotland the Normans' influence deeply penetrated the whole conception of their rights among the land-holding classes, and also the legal doctrines."

<sup>64</sup>See Cunningham, "Differences of Economic Development," pp. 180-181; Grant, pp. 38, 65-79, 254-256; George G. Coulton, *Scottish Abbeys and Social Life* (Cambridge, 1933), pp. 124-128, 263.

lands," writes Miss Grant, "it is, unfortunately, impossible to say. There is no evidence of its existence."<sup>65</sup>

Most modern historians acknowledge, furthermore, that feudalism was extended into the Highlands and Isles during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>66</sup> There was resistance to this extension, and some kindreds or nuclei of clans may have survived intact; but all we can be sure of is that the *idea* of kinship as a social nexus persisted in some areas. In any case, clean organization seems to have been a revival rather than an unbroken continuity; and the revived form of organization extended itself increasingly in the Highlands during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>67</sup>

The clan system as modern historians know it owes a good deal to feudalism for its preservation and resembles feudalism somewhat more than it does the tribal system of Wales. The typical clan has the marks of an essentially feudal order permeated with ideas of kinship—ideas which serve as valid ties between members. The clan-chief often held his lands by feudal tenure. The clansmen were his tenants and owed him dues and allegiance in their turn.<sup>68</sup> A vital part of the system in many areas was the tacksman, who held a long and somewhat privileged lease in return for military service and the collection of rents from other tenants.<sup>69</sup> It is not even clearly evident that the tacksman was always related to the chief by blood.<sup>70</sup> In fact, the economic and military ties of the chief and his tenants were so important that one is tempted to question the claims of the more ardent defenders of the familial aspects of clanship. As McKerral writes, "Long-standing custom, subservience, and economic weakness were likely to furnish motives quite as strong as those based on the ties of kindred."<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, the blend of real and fictitious ties of kinship did much to cement the bonds of Scottish feudalism and to insure its continuance well into the eighteenth century.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>65</sup> *Social and Economic Development*, p. 63.

<sup>66</sup> See Grant, p. 150; Adam, *The Clans*, pp. 101-102; William C. Mackenzie, *The Highlands and Isles*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>67</sup> See Grant, pp. 150-151, 476, 496.

<sup>68</sup> Mackenzie, *The Highlands and Isles*, pp. 88-89; cf. David Mackay, *Clan Warfare in the Scottish Highlands* (Paisley, 1922), pp. 11-12.

<sup>69</sup> See Andrew McKerral, "The Tacksman and His Holding in the South-West Highlands," *Scot. Hist. Rev.*, XXVI (April, 1947), 10-25.

<sup>70</sup> McKerral, pp. 20-21.

<sup>71</sup> Page 21.

<sup>72</sup> See Grant, pp. 496-502, for examples of the use of clan-organization to bolster feudal ties.

The Border clans, which evidently arose later than the Highland clans and adopted some of their characteristics, owed their existence to the same warlike conditions that had encouraged clanship in the Highlands.<sup>73</sup> The incessant guerrilla warfare with England, the frequent raids over the Border, made some form of association for mutual defense inevitable; and the form which suggested itself was that of kinship. Other ties were acknowledged, however: "broken men" were adopted into the clan, especially if their fighting ability was good; other dependents paid "black-mail" to one or more clans for protection.<sup>74</sup>

In modern studies of English and Scottish medieval society, the nuclear family is seen to be the strongest unit of kinship, and the rather vague bilateral kinship-structure that characterize modern European society is seen emerging as the dominant form. Family pride and property considerations made lineage and alliance by marriage important to the propertied classes, even as consciousness of social status sometimes makes lineage important to certain upper-class contemporary groups.

Although a complete survey of kinship-problems in specific ballads does not lend itself to article-length treatment, a few remarks on the application of historical studies to some representative topics may be useful.

Since most of the Scottish ballads of Border raids and of clan-warfare deal with events of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, one would hardly expect to find among these ballads many traces of a prehistoric society. In the Border ballads, one finds tales of raiding and retaliation in which economic motives are strongly expressed through concern with booty, "black-mail," and "rescue shot." Revenge is sometimes taken for a near kinsman, but there is no schedule of wergilds; and the act of revenge for a near kinsman, as Miss Phillpotts has pointed out, is no guarantee that the kindred is extensively organized and highly cohesive: "The exercise of blood-vengeance by a near relative . . . affords no proof that the kindred has not been narrowed down to something more like the modern family."<sup>75</sup>

<sup>73</sup>Grant, p. 477. For accounts of the conditions, see W. Mackay Mackenzie, "The Debateable Land," *Scot. Hist. Rev.*, XXX (Oct., 1951), 109-125; Hans Steinberg, *Studien zur englisch-schottischen Border-Ballade* (diss., Marburg, 1929), p. 51.

<sup>74</sup>See Steinberg, pp. 54-55; John Veitch, *The History and Poetry of the Scottish Border* (Edinburgh, 1893), II, 33.

<sup>75</sup>*Kindred and Clan*, p. 6.

Many of the Scottish ballads of clan-warfare are fragmented; but an examination of the best preserved of these ballads and of prose accounts of the events with which they deal shows the clan in its larger context.

"The Fire of Frendraught" (Child, No. 196) deals with an incident in a feud between the Crichtons of Frendraught and the Gordons of Rothiemay,<sup>76</sup> though only Gavin Greig's version is explicit about the feud.<sup>77</sup> The ballad ignores a second feud between Frendraught and the Leslies, who were suspected of the burning which caused the death of Rothiemay,<sup>78</sup> and treats the situation as one of personal hatred, chiefly on the part of Lady Frendraught. Although both Crichton and Gordon are clan-names, the leading figures in the prose accounts of the feud were aristocrats and their relatives and friends. Relatives took part in the quarrel on both sides: Frendraught was assisted by George Gordon, his "brother-german," and by James Leslie, Frendraught's uncle; and the Marquis of Huntly resented the killing of his kinsman, William Gordon of Rothiemay, in an early stage of the feud.<sup>79</sup> Rothiemay's eldest son, John Gordon, attempted to avenge his father's death but seems to have relied on free-booters led by James Grant more than on regular clansmen of the Gordons for his purpose.<sup>80</sup>

Though the rival clans of the Gordons and the Forbeses were involved in "Captain Car, or Edom o Gordon" (No. 178), the occasion for the burning of Forbes' stronghold was an incident of the religious and political warfare that took place during the reign of Mary Queen of Scots. Whether military necessity, religious zeal, or spiteful opportunism was the predominant motive in Gordon's action will probably never be ascertained.<sup>81</sup> In any case, the ballad has largely overlooked the historical context and made the burning the act of a raiding clan, with a "deadly feud" as the pretext.<sup>82</sup> Although the rival clans are the major forces involved in the ballad account, service for pay is recognized: a man formerly in the service of the besieged lady is now in the pay of Adam Gordon:

<sup>76</sup>See James Browne, *A History of the Highlands and of the Highlands Clans*, 2nd ed. (London, 1857), I, 296-300; Francis James Child, ed., *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Boston, 1882-1898), IV, 39-42, 43, n. 1.

<sup>77</sup>Gavin Greig, *Last Leaves of Traditional Ballads and Ballad Airs*, ed. Alexander Keith (Aberdeen, 1925), p. 121, No. lviii, stanza 2.

<sup>78</sup>Greig, p. 120; Browne, I, 299-300; Child, IV, 40.

<sup>79</sup>Browne, I, 296-297.

<sup>80</sup>Browne, I, 297; Child, IV, 40.

<sup>81</sup>See Child, III, 424-425.

<sup>82</sup>Child, No. 178 F, stanza 2 (III, 435), G, 2 (III, 436), H, 3 (IV, 513).

"Ye paid me weil my hire, lady,  
 Ye paid me weil my fee,  
 But now I'm Edom of Gordon's man,  
 Maun either do or die."<sup>83</sup>

In "The Bonnie House o Airlie" (No. 199), an incident of seventeenth-century civil strife is treated as a family feud:

It fell on a day, and a bonny simmer day,  
 When green grew aits and barley,  
 That there fell out a great dispute  
 Between Argyll and Airlie.<sup>84</sup>

Actually, the plundering of Airlie seems to have been a bit of opportunism on Argyll's part: he seized upon the pretext offered by his commission from Montrose and upon the occasion of the Earl of Airlie's doubtful standing with the ruling powers to plunder the earl's estate.<sup>85</sup>

A quarrel over fines due for fishing illegally, according to two accounts, led to a fight in which John Gordon of Brackley, his brother William, and their cousin James Gordon in Culz were killed.<sup>86</sup> The ballad of "The Baron of Brackley" (No. 203) makes the incident a raid on Brackley's castle, possibly with the complicity of Brackley's wife.

Enough examples have perhaps been cited to show how litigation, civil warfare, and the use of the royal commission entered into the strategy of rival families and feuding clans. The simple blood-feud can hardly be found; surrounding circumstances are usually complex. References to the degrees of kinship involved in clan affairs do not go far into extended family relationships: cousins-german and nephews are mentioned, and the Border ballads show the importance of the family name as a rallying standard. The quarrels and alliances of aristocratic families make up the substance of many of the warlike incidents of Scottish tradition. These families and their adherents were doubtless the forces the governor of Scotland had in mind when he told the king of France he could not prosecute certain offenders:

Thairfoir he concludit with himself that he wold continew the prosecutiōne quhill he thought better tyme: and incontinent sent to the king of France showing the manner how Scottismen war all

<sup>83</sup>No. 178 D, stanza 14 (III, 433-434).

<sup>84</sup>No. 199 A, stanza 1 (IV, 56).

<sup>85</sup>Child, IV, 55.

<sup>86</sup>Child, IV, 80-81.

alyed with vtheris, and thair blood so mixt, that everie ane of thame  
tuik pairt with vtheris so againes him, that thei thought him bot  
ane stranger.<sup>87</sup>

Such, too, are the "kine and freindis" that support Douglas and other leaders of aristocratic factions, if Lindsay may thus far be trusted.<sup>88</sup> Kinship plays a part in the Scottish accounts, but the arrangements are evidently loose and informal, not tightly organized like the medieval Welsh kindreds. If there was a continuous evolution from tribal society to clanship, neither the ballads nor the historical materials furnish sufficient evidence to establish it. The personal loyalties set forth in the ballads require no such elaborate explanation: common locality and common economic and military interests account for these attachments quite adequately.

Apart from ballads of clan affairs, references to degrees of kinship beyond the nuclear family are sparse in the Child texts. The "great-grand-aunt" of "Burd Isabel and Earl Patrick" (No. 257) is worthy of note. In "Old Robin of Portingale" (No. 80), the twenty-four kinsmen whose help the lady enlists in getting rid of her husband are all "next cozens." One can hardly build a case for the solidarity of the kindred on these examples.

In the absence of tribal "survivals," the situation within the nuclear family as the ballads portray it is best seen in the context of latter-day feudalism, with due allowance for the wide diffusion of certain folklore motifs. The recurrent theme of revolt against parental authority is thus partly a reflection of folklore: the parent who sets impossible tasks for the suitor for his daughter's hand or resists the suit by other means, the eloping bride, and the lowly suitor who wins the high-born maid against her kinsmen's will are stock figures in folk literature. On the other hand, since medieval parents wielded much greater authority than modern parents, and since there were some abuses of that authority, the social milieu furnished a hospitable climate for the motifs of repression and revolt. Likewise, the cruel brother and the forceful or treacherous mother-in-law appear frequently in folklore.

The portrayal of the mother-in-law and of the ballad matron in general remains to be considered; the lack of convincing evidence for a metocratic phase of social life in most of British history makes it desirable to look for explanations of maternal authority in the circum-

<sup>87</sup>Robert Lindsay of Pitscottie, *The Cronicles of Scotland*, ed. J. G. Dalyell (Edinburgh, 1814), II, 298.

<sup>88</sup>*Cronicles*, I, 2, 25, 36-39, 45, 82, 86, 136.

stances of medieval life. Apart from folklore, the respect accorded by law and custom to widows, together with the chivalric attitude toward women, would account for some of this prestige. Though Scottish custom favored the male line in succession and inheritance,<sup>89</sup> the rules of inheritance under feudalism provided for heiresses and perhaps account for some of the exceptions noted in Scottish society. Even in the matter of family names, there were, in manorial areas, some exceptions to the rule of transmission in the male line.<sup>90</sup> And the right to hold property, though subject to limitations, in itself indicates a certain respect.

Some of the prestige accorded to women can also be accounted for on the grounds of their supposed possession of occult powers. Older women, for the most part, enjoyed this respect—and occasionally suffered from it. Celtic and Norse traditions may account for some of the witchcraft in the ballads; but, as Coulton points out, there was a considerable body of belief in witchcraft in the Middle Ages, and women, though they had no monopoly of the black art, often bore the brunt of blame for it.<sup>91</sup>

Apparent traces of matrilineal descent implied in commonplace references to the sister's son are not confined to the ballads: romances and chronicles also make allusion to this relative.<sup>92</sup> But even this evidence need not point to a matrilineal system in the background of ballad-lore. Aside from the isolated instance of the "Pictish succession," there is no hint of such a system in the British past.<sup>93</sup> Though the sister's son was a figure of some significance in medieval Europe, he had no need of a matrilineal society to establish his importance. Homans points out the frequency and practicability of this relationship in the institution of wardship (a mother's brother had the least to gain from the death of his ward) and notes that a close relationship between the mother's brother and the sister's son exists in many patrilineal societies.<sup>94</sup> Modern Ireland furnishes instances of just such a relationship.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>89</sup>Skene, I, 104-105; Logan, p. 123.

<sup>90</sup>Homans, p. 197.

<sup>91</sup>George G. Coulton, *Medieval Panorama* (Cambridge, 1947), p. 115.

<sup>92</sup>See, for example, Eugène Vinaver, ed., *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory* (Oxford, 1947), III, 1230-1233; Seeböhm, *Tribal System*, p. 208; Lindsay, I, 64, 97, 175, II, 283-284.

<sup>93</sup>See W. C. Mackenzie, *The Highlands and Isles*, p. 73; Skene, *The Highlanders*, I, 81; John H. Stevenson, "The Law of the Throne—Tanistry and the Introduction of Primogeniture," *Scot. Hist. Rev.*, XXV (Oct., 1927), 2.

<sup>94</sup>English Villagers, pp. 191-192.

<sup>95</sup>Arensburg and Kimball, p. 68.

The frequency of the theme of kinship in British balladry can be understood in terms of its environment. Late medieval society was so constituted as to give many of the kinship-centered motifs of folklore a reasonably hospitable reception, and a merger of folklore and realism could easily have taken place. Although the feudal order was crumbling, personal loyalties were still vital; in the stem-family with its ambitions and its informal alliances, aristocratic ideas of family honor were still meaningful and socially advantageous blood-ties were still serious concerns. Such seriousness about family matters would explain the tragic tone in the ballads of kinship; and the metrical and musical form of those ballads would give esthetic distance and formal resolution to their representations of an otherwise insoluble conflict.

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## THE HAUNTED BAYOU

by JOHN Q. ANDERSON

A south Louisiana folk tale about a fisherman's ghost who was condemned to row a pirogue forever, in a hunted bayou, has turned up in an unexpected place — in the columns of the *Spirit of the Times*, the weekly New York newspaper which was the chief outlet of frontier writing originating in the Old Southwest in the ante-bellum period. Since the frontier writers were primarily concerned with unusual "characters" and "scenes,"<sup>1</sup> they seldom recorded folk tales, legends, and ghost stories, probably because William T. Porter's lusty *Spirit* was aimed at the sporting gentry who were more interested in the hunting sketch, the amusing anecdote, and the humorous sketch about illiterate backwoodsmen.<sup>2</sup> Louisiana's two most widely known contributors to the *Spirit*, Thomas Bangs Thorpe<sup>3</sup> and Henry Clay Lewis ("Madison Tensas, M.D., the Louisiana Swamp Doctor"),<sup>4</sup> both employed the

<sup>1</sup>In his preface to *Georgia Scenes* (1835), the first and most influential book of Southwestern humor, A. B. Longstreet maintained that he had presented authentic characters and scenes. Subsequent humorists of the Old Southwest generally followed Longstreet's lead, as Walter Blair shows in "Humor of the Old Southwest (1830-1867)" in his *Native American Humor* (New York, 1937), pp. 62-101. See also the preface to Franklin J. Meine's *Tall Tales of the Southwest* (New York, 1930).

<sup>2</sup>The most thorough study of the *Spirit of the Times* is Norris W. Yates' "William Trotter Porter and the Development of Frontier Writing, 1831-1861," unpublished dissertation (New York University, 1953).

<sup>3</sup>Thorpe (1815-1878) was, of course, not a native Louisianian but a New Englander who came South for his health. While editing newspapers in Louisiana, he wrote his most famous sketches. He also painted portraits, served as a correspondent during the Mexican War, and eventually took a government post in New York where he died.

<sup>4</sup>Lewis (1825-1850) also was not a native of Louisiana but was born in South Carolina and grew up in Mississippi. He came to Madison Parish in 1846 and practiced medicine there until his death by drowning in 1850 at the age of twenty-five. He published six of his best sketches in the *Spirit of the Times* between 1845 and 1848. These and others were published in book form as *Odd Leaves from the Life of a Louisiana Swamp Doctor* (Philadelphia, 1850). For identification of Lewis as "Madison Tensas," see my "Henry Clay Lewis, Alias 'Madison Tensas, M.D., The Louisiana Swamp Doctor,'" *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*, XLIII (Jan., 1955), 58-78; and "Folklore in the Writings of 'The Louisiana Swamp Doctor,'" *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, XIX (Dec., 1955), 243-51. A biography of Dr. Lewis is in preparation.

fantasy of the tall tale in their backwoods sketches,<sup>5</sup> but they avoided the traditional folk tale as such.

The author of the tale of the haunted bayou is known only by his initials, H. P. A., though he was probably a journalist in New Orleans.<sup>6</sup> His tale is of interest to students of Louisiana folklore because it illustrates the adaptation of folk themes to the local situation in south Louisiana in the 1840's and because it employs the typical style of the popular backwoods humor of the period. The sketch, as it appeared in the *Spirit*, July 24, 1847, follows:

Leaves from Our Log — The Haunted Bayou

By H. P. A. of New Orleans

"The odds on the alligator."

"Two to one he has him."

And Harry uncorked another bottle of claret. The heat of the day rendered the shade so refreshing that we were not disposed to leave it.

Though Staples had been calling to us from the other side of the bayou, we still kept our seats around the table-cloth, which, spread upon the clean white shells beneath the spreading branches of a live oak, was covered with numerous dishes of Joe's concocting, flanked by sundry bottles, over which Harry exercised a special supervision. Perceiving that we were in no wise disposed to hurry ourselves to bring him across, and becoming impatient at the sight of the liquor, and the smells of the viands which reached his olfactories, without more ado he plunged into the bayou, and had reached its middle, when from a point some fifty yards above, a huge alligator, basking in the sun, saw the swimmer, and ready to embrace so favorable an opportunity of making a hearty meal, swam rapidly toward him; perceiving us, however, he slackened his speed as if doubtful whether to yield to fear or obey the urgings of his appetite. Staples struck out like a leading nag on the last quarter stretch.

"An even bet that he closes on him in five seconds," said Walter, pulling out his watch.

<sup>5</sup>See especially Thorpe's "Big Bear of Arkansas" (1841) and Lewis's "The Indefatigable Bear-Hunter" (1850) which refers directly to Thorpe's famous sketch.

<sup>6</sup>In the *Spirit* Porter greeted H. P. A. as "a new Louisiana correspondent" and encouraged contributions from him in the issue of March 27, 1847. H. P. A. responded with his tale of the haunted bayou in July of that year. Later, he contributed "Abe Newham's 'Nupshells,'" a humorous description of a backwoods wedding in South Louisiana (XVII, No. 46, Jan. 8, 1848); and "Stingaree Fishing," a fishing sketch (XVII, No. 50, Feb. 5, 1848). These and other references indicate that H. P. A. was a newspaper man in New Orleans.

"I'll take *all* those bets," said Will, as a sharp crack followed the raising of his rifle to his shoulder, and the alligator, clashing his ponderous jaws, lashing the water into a foam, sunk to the bottom.

Staples shook himself as he clambered up the bank, saying, "You needn't a'gin yerself so much trouble. I calk'late I'm ekal to *one* alligator, 'specially as I've licked two of the *rep-tyles* in a few fights afore *this*," and he spread his wet garments in the sun to dry. "Ef I had a been hard crowded I reckon I could a gagged him with this," pulling a newspaper out of his hat, as he sat down among us, and dove into the vittles and drink.

"Gagged him with that!" said Harry. "What is it?"

"It's the *Speerit* I borre'd from Hanc, containin' that yarn of Will's called 'Sparring with a Grizzly Bear.' It's tough enough to a tired his digestion for a month of Sundays, let alone tasting me nuther."

A shout of laughter followed this sally of Uncle Seth. "Devilish poor thanks for my shot," said Will gruffly.

"Where the deuce did you come from?" asked all.

Staples drank for the fourth time. "Let me take the wrinkles out of my belly fust, and I'll tell you." In a few moments the last morsel of the *court-boullen* had disappeared and frightful ravages committed in the other solids, not including the *Mongahaly*<sup>7</sup> which had suffered severely, when he threw himself back, shouting for Joe to "come and clear away the truck."

Well, you know, I set out for John's cabin yesterday morning; when I got there him and his fellars was haulin' the seine, and I took a hand in it, seein' it war poaty full and come in mighty tedious. We did make some everlastin', abundant hauls, I tell you; and John tapp'd a bar'l of red-eye he'd got a day or two afore from New Orleans, and it was the ra'al proof. The more we drank the more we hauled, and I b'lieve ef I hadn't wanted to go over to Old Man Lew's, on crooked bio [bayou] yonder, I'd been a suckin' and pullin' *alter-nately* 'twell this time. I had jest about as much as I could see, when I sot out; it war getting dark, and I 'spose I must a took the wrong bio [bayou], for it seemed sorter new to me; but arter paddlin' a good spell I went ashore on a pint to cook suthen for supper. I clared away the grass, struck a light, and with a few sticks lit a fire. I took my snack and started off agin.

<sup>7</sup>Apparently a name for whiskey, perhaps from the Monongahela River. Other euphemisms for whiskey include "bald face," "red-eye," and "the stranger."

"It was by this time pooty tol'able dark, and I wondered why I didn't come to Old Man Lew's — but paddled on. It grew darker and darker, twell bimeby I couldn't see the banks of the bio [bayou], and bein' afeared I should pass the old man's afore I knowed, I kept a hollerin' as I went along, layin' myself out to shoot the old p'rogue 'long as fast as I could. I kept hollerin', but didn't hear no anser, and 'lowed at last that they must be all drunk or gone i-sterin' [oystering], and din't hear me, but I kept paddlin' on, for 'twar no use to stop; and the idee never struck me that I'd got into the wrong bio [bayou] twell it began to grow light. Day war a breaking, and pooty quick it war light enough to see, and *pre*haps [perhaps] I didn't cuss when I found I war right ain the pint whar I cooked my supper the night afore — I swore — oh, I *swore* — I cussed the bio [bayou] — I cussed everything that ar in it — the grass, cause it grew on its banks — I cussed the p'rogue for comin' into it — I cussed myself more'n all, cause I was such a fool to stay in it so long — twell I thought the sun wouldn't rise for my cussin'. It war the wrong bio [bayou] — I war in it — and the fust thing to be done was to get out of it. I put about and made tall licks for the place whar I came in; but I hope goodlicker may choke me if I could find it, and I began to git tangled up and twisted about in the infernal place twell I knowed I'd got into the *Ha'nted Bio* [Bayou].

"The water was as black as ink, and flung out the perfume of h—l every time I dipped my paddle into it; the reeds and grass that grew along it looked green, but as soon as you teched them, snalled off like dead sticks, and the leaves crumbled away like ashes — thar war no birds twitterin' away in the cane — they knowed better than to come into sech an abominable stinkin' place. All the stories I hearn tell of the ha'nted bio [bayou] come right up afore me, jest as ef I war readin' 'em out'n a book — how nobody that ever went into it came out, but kept paddlin' on the same, twell the eend of all things — I'd rather go to h—l and done with it at onces. I thought about Pete Hudson. You never heerd about Pete, did you?"

"No," said George. "What of him?"

Staples applied himself to the bottle again and proceeded. "Well, Pete war an i-sterman [oysterman] — one of the d—dest, cussin', noisy, blusterin' fellars that ever was. One day, goin' on six years ago, four or five boats in company, loaded with isters [oysters] for town, laid at the Temple waitin' for a breeze. Pete war along, and 'mongst other

things the fellars got talkin' about the ha'nted bio [bayou], when Pete said he would like to explore that place — the rest of 'em thought he was a jokin' — he asked whar it was. They told him (it's no joke to find the way to it — the h—l of it is comin' back), and when they seed him git into his p'rogue, they knowed he was in airnest, tried to prevail on him not to go, but 'twar no use. Pete went off, and 'lowed he'd stay thar twell the third advent\* but what he'd explore it, and ef he wasn't back by sundown, he hopped he might smell h—l! They waited twell night, and no Pete came back. They knowed 'twere no use waitin' any longer, so they left his i-ster [oyster] boat at the Temple, and five days after, when they came back from the city, it was thar yit. I reckon Pete aint done his explorations, for he hasn't been seen since — twell today."

"So you've seen him, have you?" asked Walter.

Staples drank again and went on with his narration. "I was sayin' I war thinkin' of Pete and paddlin' away, lookin' out anxiously for a chance to sneak out'n the scrape, when I seed suthen that made me shiver as though I had the ager [ague]. Right ahead, slidin' over the water towards me, come a p'rogue with a man sittin' in it, and I knowed it war Pete the minit I set eyes on him, though his face was covered with a long beard, and his har that streamed out behind was as white as snow. Thar was the same old striped coat, and the same caliker [calico] shirt he had on the last time I seed him livin'. Thar was no hat on his head, and his clothes looked mouldly and rotten, as though they'd been buried. The p'rogue itself was covered with a green slimy moss. His paddle made no noise as it dipped into the water as mine did, and he seemed not to move as he handled it.

"A cold sweat come all over me — I felt as ef my blood was turnin' to ice, and my limbs freezin' stiff — my hair seemed lifting my hat off from my head. In a minit Pete was 'long side of me. Without openin' his mouth, in a voice that 'peared to come from the bowels of the yerth [earth], he said, 'For God's sake, stranger, tell me the way to the Temple.' That war a fair question, but I was oncapable of answerin' it. His eyes looked as though they were lead, as he stared anxiously at me waitin' for my answer — they seemed to burn a hole right into my breast. Says I, jest as if it was an ordinary occasion, I

\*An allusion to the Adventist movement resulting from the preaching of William Miller (1782-1849), who prophesied the second coming of Christ between March, 1843, and March, 1844. The movement caused great concern and newspapers published many jokes about the Millerites.

didn't know the way myself, and heaving a deep sigh, he paddled off, and I did the same in the opposite direction. Says I to myself, feelin' pooty much down in the mouth, this is d—d miser'ble com'ny you've got into and are likely to stay in for some time to come 'cordin' to all accounts — d—d pooty business to be scullin' about in this infernal mean bio [bayou] twell the yerth [earth] busts — no chance to sleep — no rest — no eatin' — it may be 'greeable to some, but I'm cussed ef I'd stay here longer than it would take to licker, ef I had my say about it. And so I kept on paddlin' for a good spell, when lookin' ahead — creation! — thar right afore me, was the same p'rogue, the same figger, settin' stiff and stern. I warn't so much skeered this time. I 'peared to be gittin' used to it, but how could he be thar, when he had passed me and gone the other way an hour afore — but no matter, thar it war, and it slowly moved alongside of me. 'For God's sake, stranger, tell me the way to the Temple,' said he in a husky voice. 'I don't know the way any more'n yourself,' said I, 'and you'd better b'lieve I'd be out'n this in double quick time if I did.' And with a dismal groan he went on as before.

"Now, by this time, 'twasn't no more'n natral that I should begin to feel mighty oneasy, as I plied my paddle quicker and faster — my head filled with thinkin' in what an outragious bad fix I was in. A half an hour might a slipped away, when I chanced to raise my eyes, and thar was the figger right ahead of me agin. I couldn't stand it no longer — I put my p'rogue ashore — jumped kerslash into the mire up to middle, and thar was some to the tallest kind of scramblin' through the mud that ever *was* seen. I've been wallerin' about the ma'shes through the cane-brakes ever since, twell I seed the smoke from your fire; then I was in hopes agin. I hope I'll never git into the ha'nted bio [bayou] agin — onct'll satisfy me."

"It's a pity you didn't bring Pete with you; the poor devil must be confounded hungry by this time," said Walter.

"A strange *dream*," said George. "That red-eye had remarkable effect on you, Staples." And we burst into a loud laugh again.

"No laffin' matter," said Joe, who, with eager countenance, had been listening to Staples' recital. "No laffin' matter, Massa. It's true as de Bible — ebry body about here knows dere's sech a place, and dey wouldn't no more go into it dan dey would into de 'fernal reegins."

Joe stumped off and soon from the sloop his cry of "All aboard" told of everything being in readiness, and ere long we had left the shell

bank and entered upon the broad bay, over whose ruffled surface we were gliding swiftly towards our cabin.

The most obvious theme in H. P. A.'s tale of the haunted bayou is that of the special place which for reasons of magic or the supernatural is dangerous or fatal for a mortal being to enter. Both Pete Hudson's fellow fishermen, who tried to persuade him not to go, and Negro slave Joe, who vouched for Staples' story, indicate that the haunted bayou was under a tabu, although the story gives no reason for the restriction. Pete's violation of the tabu might not have proved fatal to him had he not sworn an oath — that he would explore the bayou and be back by sundown or else he would "smell hell." The inevitable consequence was death and the sentence to row forever in the haunted bayou without finding his way out.

The activities of Pete Hudson's ghost, noiselessly rowing the moss-covered pirogue, suggests another common theme, that of the spectre-ship. Stories of phantom ships, manned by ghostly crews doomed to sail forever certain areas, are a commonplace of the folklore of many countries. Sometimes these whist ships appear before distressed seamen during storms, and though hailed the spectre crew never answers. Captain Vanderdechen's "Flying Dutchman," which according to legend haunts the Cape of Good Hope, is the most famous example. Because of a terrible oath the Captain swore, his ghost ship is destined never to reach port. Similar spectre-ships haunt the North Sea, and at least fifteen are alleged to sail the waters of northeastern United States.<sup>9</sup> H. P. A.'s tale of the haunted bayou modifies the phantom-ship tale by confining the accursed ghost to a mysterious bayou in south Louisiana, and he allows Pete Hudson's ghost to speak, although the traditional theme of the oath's bringing disaster is retained. These alterations (if indeed conscious) were likely a result of the desire to localize the story, as was conventional in frontier writing.

Staples' description of the haunted bayou, with its black water, sulphureous odor, and crumbling vegetation, calls to mind Poe's landscapes, as indeed the description of Pete Hudson is reminiscent of Coleridge's ancient mariner.

Journalist H. P. A. was far more concerned with telling his story

<sup>9</sup>R. D. Jameson in Funk and Wagnall's *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend*, II, 868.

in the manner familiar to the readers of the *Spirit of the Times* than he was with allusions to folklore and literature; consequently, he used the framework story characteristic of the popular humor of the period. The framework sketch begins with the description of an actual situation, often the camp of a group of hunters in a mellow mood after food and drink, then introduces a member of the group who tells a tale in dialect about a local character or event, and then returns to the opening scene, sometimes giving the reaction of the group.<sup>10</sup> The holiday mood of the sketches arises from the relaxation of city dwellers or local gentry, released from the restraints of their society, who take the hunt as an occasion for enjoying the masculine pastimes of eating, drinking, yarning, and playing practical jokes. Their conversation is filled with allusions to hunting, gambling, horse racing, boxing, and cock fighting.<sup>11</sup> The backwoodsmen who served as guides for such hunting parties or who were encountered on such expeditions were sources of amusement because of the difference in speech, manners, and customs. Thus, the humor of the sketches usually turns on the ignorance, laziness, gullibility, or trickery of these backwoodsmen as seen by the more sophisticated gentry who, since writing for publication was unbecoming to a gentleman, masqueraded under humorous pseudonyms.<sup>12</sup>

H. P. A.'s sketch observes most of the conventions of frontier writing. The framework of his story pictures a group of New Orleans sportsmen on a fishing expedition. The holiday mood, enhanced by a plentiful supply of liquor, leads them to gamble on whether a man will be able to swim across a bayou without being caught by an alligator. The typically masculine atmosphere is reflected in the references to swearing and the casual reaction to danger. The man threatened by the alligator turns out to be a local fisherman who, after he is filled with food and drink, relates a personal experience which leads directly and naturally to the tale of the haunted bayou, the main part of the sketch.

The story is told in dialect which reproduces as nearly as possible the speech of the period. The author uses apostrophes to show omis-

<sup>10</sup>See Blair's discussion of the framework sketch, *Native American Humor*, pp. 90-92.

<sup>11</sup>At least in print, that is. Porter would not print sketches on politics or religion and repeatedly warned his contributors through his "To Correspondents" column against "too spicy" contributions. Sketches must be acceptable for both "ladies and gentlemen" to read, he said.

<sup>12</sup>Pen names of some Louisiana contributors include: "Trebla" (Albert spelled backwards), "The Middle Aged 'Un," "The Very Young 'Un," "Attakapas," "Stoke Stout," "Pardon Jones," and others.

sions, misspellings and hyphens to indicate pronunciation, italics to show special emphasis, long sentences full of dashes to capture the rapid flow of speech, and coined words and localisms to give atmosphere. The seeming inconsistencies in spelling and grammar reflect actual language use of uneducated speakers whose speech habits vary greatly as careful attention to such speakers will quickly show. The style of this sketch, then, shows that H. P. A. was well acquainted with the devices common to frontier writing, a method which produced swiftly moving narrative, colloquial flavor of the oral tale, action, and virility. Altogether, frontier writing contains a realism unknown to American fiction in the 1840's.

In conclusion, H. P. A.'s tale of the haunted bayou is not only an effective ghost story, but cleverly presents that story in a framework which produces a striking contrast between the realism of the typically masculine hunting party and the fantasy of the haunted bayou. The success of the combination makes one regret that the frontier writers generally devoted so little attention to recording similar tales.

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## LEGENDS OF THE KING'S HIGHWAY (ANECDOTES FROM ST. AUGUSTINE)

by J. RUSSELL REAVER

ONLY SELDOM IN these modern days can the folklorist meet a genuine storyteller who is able to recall at length events of local history on the popular level. In February, 1950, while I was doing field work on a research grant from the Research Council of Florida State University, I was introduced to Mr. E. L. Reyes of Moultrie, Florida, a retired surveyor and a resident for many years of St. Augustine. Mr. Reyes' mind is as well stocked with anecdotes of earlier St. Augustine as his workshop on his farm is filled with manuscripts, records, documents, newspapers, and varied relics of the city. From his mental museum of history recalled on the folk level I was fortunate enough to secure the following group of vivid legendary tales that help revive something of the popular culture of the St. Augustine region.

Since to the folklorist the art of storytelling is particularly interesting, I have edited only very slightly Mr. Reyes' accounts; the stories are faithful records of his own manner of speaking, which I recorded from him in person with his approval of the manuscript.

In addition to the narrative art contained in these tales, the content, it seems to me, may be almost equally interesting to the historian, anthropologist, or creative writer. These sketches of St. Augustine folk do their bit toward helping preserve for study popular characters and attitudes of one of the most unusual sections of the Peninsula State.

The King's Road (*Camino del Rey*) extended on the south from New Smyrna, via St. Augustine, north to Cow Ford (the present site of Jacksonville). A bit of speculation, no doubt, will be apropos; namely, whether the then ruling monarch of Hispania had anything to do with its construction. It may be it was so named in honor of his Highness; but it may also be surmised that the word "King" was used to denote *chief* or principal route of travel, north by south, with its laterals, connecting the many scattered settlements of Pascua Florida.

My intention is not to depict the engineering skill of bridge building and hard-surface finishing that go to make up our Federal Aid and State Roads of today; far from it. This highway had nothing of the kind. It was simply a long, rough, crooked trail, made through the use

of travel by avoiding rough, thick, boggy places and lessening work and expense. Hence we can easily account for so many pedestrian bridges, made of logs. This type of bridge was known as a foot-log bridge. The practice of corduroying boggy places consisted in building a short stretch of the impassable portions of the road by placing small saplings crosswise, close together, with binders and stakes, to prevent floating away.

This road, with its loud-sounding name, "Camino del Rey," could boast of its name only. However, one redeeming feature presents itself; what this highway lacked in engineering skill is balanced not with fiction, but facts, and I may add, numerous pathetic and amusing historical happenings, a few of which will form the basis of this article.

## I

### SIMON, THE NOTORIOUS KLEPTOMANIAC

During the Civil War my great-grandfather, William J. Reyes, owned a small farm six miles north of St. Augustine, known as the Spanish donation to John Ayrault. Among the implements on this country place was a large fifty-pound grinding stone, not only prized by the owner but prized and often used by the neighbors, far and near, who came to sharpen their cutting tools.

In those days, many people were compelled to improvise flat smooth stones with which to whet up cutlery. A revolving stone of this type was looked upon as a luxury.

During those bellum days, many Federal soldiers were camped along the Camino del Rey. Not far distant from the above-mentioned farm was one of those camps of the Federal soldiers, and during their stay this revolving stone disappeared. Some time later, great-grandfather was informed that his grinding stone had become a deserter and had joined the Federal soldiers.

During this war period great-grandfather had in his employ a very young and active darky known by the name of Simon, who had the reputation of being a smart, quick and industrious boy, but his great failing was to take anything he was able to "tote." In other words he was an innate kleptomaniac. He didn't steal because of want, but just to keep himself in practice.

Great-grandfather informed this cunning darky of the whereabouts of his missing article and remarked: "Simon, if you can do as good a job on my grinding stone as you've done on other things, I'll give you fifty cents if you will get it for me."

"Yes, boss! I tote 'em back," said Simon.

This darky meant what he said. Sure enough, in a few days the stone returned, having become a deserter a second time. Calling Simon for details of the stone's ransom, great-grandfather held the ransom money so that Simon could see it.

"Well, tell me how you made out, Simon!"

"See, boss! Las' night am bery dark, and I tout it good time to git stone. When I git dere, de guard was a-walkin' up and down, and I jis git on my 'ands and knees and crawl like a cat, pass 'em, den I put it in a bag, and crawl pass de line; den I tote 'em home."

Today this stone is in the possession of Edward Reyes, who has mounted it. The stone is still doing duty after eighty-five years of service and apparently is good for eighty-five years more.

## II

### COON LIVER

An interesting and amusing old darky of this town was Uncle Jeffrey, better known to the tormenting boys of St. Augustine as "Coon Liver." (He loved eating coon liver.) This colored man of past war days was eligible for a pension with back pay from the Civil War. Engaging John Long, an attorney, who was one of the Republican leaders among the colored voters, he obtained this pension and back pay, amounting to several hundred dollars.

Just picture to yourself coming into several hundred dollars an old ignorant darky who had been living in a hut a half mile west of the present Florida East Coast Railway shops, on the east side of Camino del Rey, near a slaughter pen, from which he fed himself, his dogs (always eight or ten), and his chickens principally on refuse parts of beef, namely, cow heads, tripe, and intestines!

Talk about inflation! Right here we have the true meaning of the word in its fullest extent. Being really the recipient of this vast amount — as he looked upon it — his whole head, heart, and soul were filled to the exclusion of all else with the mythical thoughts of being almost

a millionaire. I seriously doubt whether he was able to count a hundred dollars. This sudden and unexpected good luck caused Coon Liver to "feel his oats" and he immediately began to "strut Miss Lizzie."

His first purchases were a fine saddle-horse, saddle and bridle, loud saddle blanket, good clothes and other accessories that go to make up a real sport. Renovated, this old man cut quite a figure among the "Chocolate-drops" of Lincolnville—only as long as this back payment lasted.

The city gates being the rendezvous of the idle boys and young men any time of day or evening, a crowd of these mischiefmakers were on hand for some prank. Whenever this old man would be seen coming or going out, the crowd would block the passage of the gates and commence putting foolish questions. He in his simplicity never failed to give them an answer — right or wrong.

This hold-up invariably excited his spirited steed, which would chew the bit and paw the earth. Reprimanding his charger, Coon Liver said, "Whoa sa! Whoa sa! Youse always want to be gwine."

Prosperity came just a little too late for Jeffrey. His horse, his money, and his soul departed, all about the same time.

### III

#### PRIVATE JOE

Private Joe Brooker of Confederate Civil War days was better known as Gordon's Bull, so called because of his bull bellowing imitations. This man lived just west of the Camino del Rey. In early past war days, Uncle Joe, as he was sometimes called, assisted deer hunters in chasing deer from the branches, swamps, and other dense places. The hunting parties absolutely needed at least three persons.

When the party consisted of two horsemen and one footman, the duty of the horsemen was to ride one on each side of the thicket while the footman travelled with the deer hounds down the middle of the branch or swamp, whooping and encouraging the hounds and making all the noise possible to frighten the game from their hiding places. At a deer's appearance, the rider dispatched it. The footman in the branch or swamp was really the first cause of the rider's luck. Hence Uncle Joe succeeded in acquiring not only the title of "Private" and "Gordon's Bull" but also of being the best "deer dog" in St. Johns County.

When Uncle Joe got the news that he was eligible for a Civil War pension, he imagined his past heavy, laborious work had put him above the laboring classes, and as long as he lived and his thirty-six dollar pension check came (which arrived promptly every quarter) plus a five dollar donation per month from the pauper fund of this county, Uncle Joe passed his days peacefully at his son-in-law's and daughter's home.

Don't imagine, for one moment, filial love was the incentive for any acts of assistance rendered the old man. The principal motive for this, I am told by one who knows, was simply to get the small income of seventeen dollars per month. This and only this kept them together. This old man, a professional at relating hard knocks and sickness, received many additional charities from other sources whom he contacted. Taking it all in all, Joe's living was invariably donated.

It is my pleasure to relate the following. Some of it was given to me by one who claims he was an actual participant.

About thirty-five or thirty-six years past, a reunion of Confederate soldiers was held in St. Augustine. Genovar's Opera House served as headquarters. The ladies of the Memorial Association supervised every detail, and, I assure you, they did an A-1 job. These vets got all that was coming to them.

This affair, one of the biggest and most successful of its kind ever held in this city, was sponsored by those veterans able to donate, with a cordial and pressing invitation to those financially unable to insist. Every preparation was completed to date, the old town decorated and filled with visitors, the reunion in full blast. — The surge of crowds to and fro, especially on St. George Street. Young and old, decrepit and infirm, literate and illiterate, well dressed and poorly dressed. — But notwithstanding all this, the gathering made no discrimination; all rubbed shoulders and elbows alike, with only one exception. Uncle Joe appeared on St. George Street closely resembling a black sheep in a large flock. He was so conspicuous that many passing would deliberately stop and look him over — this poor old, long-haired, wild whiskered man, with smoky face and hands, poor, old, tattered clothes, brogans and sockless feet, and an old hat, perhaps ransomed from some trash box. Oh! I was about to forget to mention his trousers. Instead of one pair (the weather being chilly) he had on two pairs, and the funny part of this was, instead of putting on the shorter pair first, he put on the longer first — a difference in length of approximately six inches. The hems at the bottom, from usage, were adorned with two or three

inches of fringe. Uncle Joe was solely the attraction of the ancient city.

Steve, better known as Tibe, Benét (famous Saints' catcher in early baseball days) was a good-hearted sport. He immediately began to pass the hat around, and in a short time he had collected sufficient change to "doll up" Uncle Joe. The first, most essential, was a bath, for the tonsorial shops refused admission to their chairs. Tibe Benét had a real man's task to perform, but he didn't shirk it. He supervised the bathing, procured clothing (underwear, suit of clothes—and the D. Benét shoe company donated a pair of No. 10's with stockings), a shave and haircut, and presented this old Confederate to his comrades and Tibe's own friends. The news of Gordon's Bellowing Bull spread, and every person to whom Steve introduced him was sure to ask the renovated man to imitate the bull.

With all sincerity and determination, Uncle Joe would bellow out to the top of his voice. This naturally startled, and attracted, many, who in return would repeat the same request. So Uncle Joe did nothing but walk up and down St. George Street, meeting all new acquaintances and exercising his lungs.

#### IV

##### HOG STEALING

"He who steals my purse steals trash! But he who steals my swine is rash!"

Just before the Civil War, great-grandfather homesteaded one hundred and sixty acres of land in section thirty-one, township seven, south of range thirty east, four miles south of St. Augustine on the present U. S. Highway No. 1. From all appearances of the surroundings, he conceived the idea that this Moultrie point on the north side of Moultrie Creek would make an A-1 range for hogs, owing to this area of land forming a peninsula with the Matanzas River, Moultrie Creek on the south, and a large tributary creek on the west, with its great quantity of moss producing feeds for swine, together with what the salt water coast furnished in the shape of crabs and fiddlers (tiny crustaceous piscatorials inhabiting the beaches by the millions).

This idea firmly settled in mind as a wonderful and profitable undertaking, he dickered with Mr. XYZ for a deal in a good stock of hogs. The deal consummated, the hogs were delivered in huge wooden

wagon bodies, made expressly for this delivery and drawn by oxen.

One morning great-grandfather had a team of three horses hitched to a wagon of lumber. On his way to the homestead when he struck a match to light his pipe, the reins from the lead horse fell from his grasp and lodged on the singletree in front of him. Since the horses, all very gentle and docile, were in a moderate walk, he thought it an easy matter not to delay with a stop but keep going. He could dismount on the tongue and, with the assistance of a horse on each side, would balance himself for a step or two and gather up the fallen reins. To his disappointment, his feet slipped and fell; both wheels passed over his body, severely fracturing two ribs.

The report spread that William J. Reyes had suffered a serious accident and was expected to die. Mr. XYZ hearing this good news ("There is never an ill wind, but what blows some good") decided this was apropos for the swine to come back to their range. Great-grandfather was in the confines of his home two or three months before he knew what had happened, appraisal of the affair being made to him in a strictly confidential manner.

## V

### TREATY

The treaty at Moultrie Creek between the Seminole and the pale-face occurred at the now monumented spot in section two, township eight, range twenty-nine, east St. Johns County, Florida. The tablet reads: "Treaty of Moultrie, with the Indians . . . August 1823." This treaty, according to Frederick W. Daws' *Old and New History of Florida*, was signed by Governor W. P. Duval and other Presidential representatives February, 1821, together with thirty-two of the most prominent Indian chiefs. Most noted of these Indian warriors was Neomaltha, who got into some sort of argument with Governor Duval. As with all heated arguments, the disagreement kept getting hotter, until the two got into a real fight. The governor, being a good scrapper, outfisted the Indian chief, thereby calming his ugly temper. Being roughly handled by a very determined man, and receiving a stern rebuking lecture, Neomaltha plainly showed coward feathers. His chiefship was transferred to another Indian named Hichs. Neomaltha, demoted and disgraced, returned to the Creek Tribe of Indians in Georgia.

The spot where all these exciting acts took place was, five or six years ago, one of the most beautiful standing tracts of pine timber ever to be seen anywhere in our country. There Mr. Howard Mizell erected a saw mill and operated it for some time. Mr. Mizell tells that the bullets found in these trees were numerous and troublesome to his sawyer. He has several specimens, and his supposition is that Indian and white men's skirmishes were fought there.

Descending from this monumented historical spot down to Moultrie Creek bridge, we enter the east portion of a large tract of land, on which Governor Enrigue White (1796-1811) gave permission to two of St. Augustine's lumber men to erect a saw mill and cut all the timber they desired for market purposes, but in no wise would be give any title to the land whatsoever.

Just about midway between upper Moultrie Creek and the memorable site of Fort Peyton, on the right side of Camino del Rey, going south, one's attention is attracted by the construction of a neat artificial stone wall enclosure. Upon investigation it proves to be the private burial grounds of the Speisegger family. The visitor is surprised to note the well kept premises and the number of head stones. On my last visit, there was a profusion of beautiful receding annuals in bloom, in the shadow of Florida's majestic pines.

Across from this granted lumber acreage on the right side of Camino del Rey stands another monument, which designates the site of Fort Peyton. The inscription on the tablet reads as follows: "Site of Fort Peyton during Indian War . . . 1837-1858."

## VI

### OSCEOLA

This immortal "Osceola" from the Creek Indian dialect, when translated into our language, signifies "Rising Sun." Very appropriately did it happen that in the year 1804, in a humble Indian wigwam on the Chattahoochee River, in Georgia, Osceola's mother gave birth to a child who was destined to be the "Rising Sun" of the Seminoles. When a mere child, the mother had married an Englishman, and many say this Indian boy was a half breed, while others contend he was the Englishman's stepson. However, this is a matter of opinion. This child belonged to a tribe of Creeks that had moved to Florida and joined some Creeks who had previously left Georgia.

When he was a young warrior, Osceola's endurance, his courage, his skill, and his determination endeared him to his elders, and many of his equals strove to imitate him.

The then ruling Caccio or Chief, being old and decrepit, was ready to yield — and did yield — to the government's demands; but this intrepid young man was really the "Rising Sun" of the Seminoles. He was not afraid to strongly resist by words or by arms the demand of any government that he and his fellowmen should evacuate their homes and be shipped like cattle to some distant states.

In 1837, under the command of General Hernandez, my great-grandfather, Captain John Masters, and others, went out to meet this "Rising Sun." By trickery — a foul violation of the sanctity of the flag of truce — they succeeded in putting shackles on their captive and incarcerating him in Fort Marion for a short period, thence to Charleston, South Carolina, where he died of a broken heart.

## VII

### CORN CRIB AND STEEL TRAP

One quarter mile, more or less, east of Camino del Rey lived one of St. Johns County's pioneers, a man whom everybody in this section respected for his honesty and charity. His near neighbors considered themselves lucky to have such a man as Mr. Futch to go to for advice when they needed it. A Northern gentleman purchased a small tract of land adjoining Futch's premises and proceeded to start a home. His house made habitable, he thence started his agricultural tasks of preparing and planting. This first year nature smiled on the newcomer, and his little crop of watermelons, peas, pumpkins, corn, and so forth was good, if not better than that of his neighbors, because his land had been virgin soil and well rested; his patch of corn was indeed better than he had anticipated. Its stage of maturity clearly indicated to him that a house to store his corn should be commenced at once. Mr. Futch was interviewed as to what kind of building and the size of some others sufficiently large to accommodate his crops. In those days the most economical and beneficial type of structure was made of small logs.

The crib finished and the corn and fodder housed, morning after morning our Northern settler noticed a large hole in his pile of corn. Each morning he would shovel the surrounding ears of corn to level

the depression. He explained his trouble to Mr. Futch, who came over to inspect the surrounding corn crib. Just near the place where each morning corn was missing, Mr. Futch noticed that the log construction in that side of the building contained one log with a crook in it about five and a half feet above the ground, and this was the exit of the missing corn, one ear at a time.

They placed a large steel bear trap well fastened to an inside timber with its ugly massive jaws open wide.

"Now, go to bed tonight and don't bother about your corn any more," said Mr. Futch.

His neighbor did as he was told. Before day our newcomer imagined he could hear moans but, being obedient to Mr. Futch's orders, rolled over and took another nap. Sun well up, our Northerner got his breakfast and completed other chores around the house before investigating the corn crib. The position of the dwelling to that of the corn crib was such that from a certain window one could see the place where the corn was extracted. Quietly going over to this window, he found that only a peep disclosed a six-footer in a standing position with his arms thrust between the wall logs. Instead of going to the corn crib where his prize was, he took a roundabout way to call Mr. Futch to come see the varmint that had been taking his corn. Mr. Futch arrived, and there stood a tall, lanky cracker by the name of "H," well known to Mr. Futch and the neighborhood.

"Well, 'H' is this the way you raise your corn? Mighty easy way, hain't it?"

"Neighbor, what you going to do with this here fellow?"

The new neighbor took the sack, which was partially filled (the click of the trap had halted operations), loaded it to its capacity and then made the following Samaritanical plea:

"Friend, I have more corn than I will perhaps use. Take this sack home, and if in need of more, come and ask and you shall receive. Please don't take any more."

## VIII

### SEQUENCE OF A NAGGING WIFE

In the early seventies, Henry Keech and his wife Mary Ann lived in the town of Milwaukee. Henry, a successful real estate man, could have anything money could buy, but that wasn't his desire. He longed

for compatibility and for the love of the woman he loved; far from it, all he got was continuous nagging from morn till night. Henry decided he would sell his business and enter divorce proceedings, which were speedily handled by his attorney.

Dividing his wealth between Mary and himself, he confided his troubles to one Ellen Wells, who listened to and sympathized with him. They became fond of each other and decided to marry and come to Florida in quest of a secluded home to spend the rest of their days in each other's company.

Henry and Ellen in their travels found a small country place near the south boundary line of St. Johns County. This spot surely appealed to them; they lost no time in finding the owner, contracting him, and purchasing it. It consisted of a small cottage and five or six acres of land.

They immediately got busy, renovating this small house and cleaning enough land for their flowers and vegetables. What appealed most to Henry was a salt water creek nearby, where he could indulge in his favorite sport, fishing. Procuring a small rowboat, he and Ellen were often seen spending contented moments catching fish and oysters from Master's Creek.

About three years later a stranger, William Newton, came to the Keech cottage and pretended to be so infatuated with the surroundings he begged to remain a couple of days. To this self-invitation the couple acquiesced and did all in their power to make him comfortable and welcome.

The next morning Mr. Keech invited his guest to go fishing in the nearby creek. To this, Newton gratefully agreed. The two walked down the Master's Creek, got the little boat, and put out into deep stream to tag their luck. After fishing awhile, Newton asked to be carried ashore, as the motion of the boat nauseated him. Mr. Keech rowed him to shore, where he supposedly remained while Mr. Keech rowed back to deep water and continued angling, with the impression that his guest was resting on the shore.

Stealthily Newton went to the cottage and brutally murdered Mrs. Keech. Returning to the creek, he hid himself in ambush, and as Mr. Keech was coming back to the landing Newton shot three times, each shot entering Keech's body, but not one shot proved fatal. Then using a coquina rock, he pounded it on Mr. Keech's head several times, and to make his dastardly act complete he resorted to his knife, cutting the throat of the man who had just befriended him.

Hurrying back to the stable, he saddled Keech's horse and started his get-away. While passing by one of the certain homes, this stranger was noticed by the occupants as he rode Keech's horse in a gait unfamiliar to them, the nag not being accustomed to do a pace faster than a walk. This created suspicion, and Carter decided to investigate. He immediately hurried over to the Keeches and found that one of the DuPonts had just returned with some articles he had volunteered to purchase and deliver to the Keeches while on his way to St. Augustine.

The story of the stranger riding Keech's horse and his suspicious actions was related to DuPont; they decided to investigate. Entering the cottage, they beheld Ellen lying on the floor, beaten to death.

One said to the other, "Now what has become of Henry?"

"I reckon he got it too."

A search of the premises disclosed the second victim, lying on the bank of Master's Creek, not dead, as one would expect after all he had gone through, but still breathing. First aid was rendered, a physician summoned, and in a few weeks Mr. Keech was in shape to be the State's chief witness agent against the man guilty of this heinous double tragedy.

The news of this tragedy spread like fire, and a posse of DuPonts, Carters, William Sanchez, and John Allen started the chase, overtook, and brought back their prisoner. It's related had it not been for John Allen's plea William Sanchez was bent on putting a lariat around Newton's neck, tying it to the pummel of his saddle, and dragging him along the road at break-neck speed. This procedure averted by the influence of John Allen, he was then brought to St. Augustine's jail, which was a two-celled building on Treasury Street, just west of old Dr. Vedder's Museum.

Indignation ran high. Precautions were taken to avoid lynchings. Newton confessed his guilt and implicated Mary Ann (Henry's first wife), who was later found in Jacksonville, arrested, and brought to St. Augustine to be held for investigation before the grand jury. The jury met and indicted Newton with murder and Mary Ann as an accomplice. They were tried before Judge Archibald; and the man whom Newton shot three times, beat with a rock, and whose throat he tried to cut appeared as the principal witness. Newton and Mary Ann were both found guilty of murder and sentenced to be hanged. However, some technicalities were discovered, the execution was stayed, and later

each was given a new trial, this time not in St. Augustine but in Jacksonville. Again the verdict of guilty was found against both, but the Duval jurors recommended mercy of the court. William Newton and Mary Ann were given each a life sentence.

Newton hired out to a turpentine company for years, tried to escape, but was shot to death by a guard. Mary Ann was sent to the Chattahoochee prison for women, where she died, "unwept, unhonored, and unsung." Henry Keech fully recovered and finally moved to southern Florida, where he started an orange grove.

## IX

### SWELL DOUBLE TEAM

It was Major Bowes' delight to vividly paint for his radio listeners the evolution of transportation with his favorite car models, Plymouth, Dodge, Chrysler, and so forth. But I am not going to evolve; I intend to make a seventy-year retrospect of transportation.

Mr. Billings, a highly respected citizen of St. Johns County, three score and ten years ago, was the proud owner of a nice pair of oxen and cart. Every Saturday, without fail, Mr. Billings made his trip to the city of St. Augustine to sell his wares, if any, and purchase articles for home consumption.

Six miles each way was the distance his double team had to travel. He was wont to begin his journey at the break of day, always allowing four hours for every six miles and two to four hours for his little oxen to rest and partake of noon-feed under the shady trees of King Street in front of Mr. V. Sanchez' store.

It is related that during the chilly weather Mr. Billings had a large iron pot on the front of his cart, and, when the temperature became uncomfortable, wood being abundant along the road, he simply made a fire in the pot, sat beside it smoking his pipe, and the balance of the journey was left to his oxen. It was also said that he traveled so slowly one might count the spokes of the wheels as they made their revolutions.

## X

## Two Wood Vendors

The early days of the Most Reverend Bishop Verot in Florida were devoted to succoring the needy. It is said that he actually dispossessed himself of his own clothing when others needed it.

Mr. and Mrs. Miller, who lived on Camino del Rey southwest of St. Augustine, were wood vendors. The Mr. did the cutting, and the Mrs. did the delivering. Just imagine a woman braving the elements, driving a horse hitched to an open vehicle, handling black sooty wood, day after day, with clothes in rags, feet almost bare.

This object of pity trying to dispose of her little bit of wood came into contact with the Bishop. He had compassion on her, purchasing her little load of wood. He gave her lunch at the Cathedral kitchen, and while her meal detained her, the Bishop went to the rectory to gather some of his and his priests' old clothing, thinking she would utilize the cloth in these garments in making clothes for herself and her children. Among the articles was an old bishop's cassock of purple with red buttons. Accepting the bundle she departed.

After a short lapse of time, Mrs. Miller appeared again on St. George Street, with another load of wood. But this time she was well dressed and looked real respectable — but — she was dressed — in the Bishop's cassock!

## XI

## BURLOW

Living in the southern part of what was formerly St. Johns, now known as Flagler, County, between 1800 and 1821, was one of Florida's most notorious characters, reputed to be exceedingly wealthy. This wealth consisted of much land, live stock, and a large number of Negro slaves, who served him in different capacities as body guards, house servants, and agriculture workers. To these assets add a much valued piratical collection of booty, taken on the high seas.

Burlow's principal agricultural crop was sugar cane, and on his premises he operated quite a large apparatus for making crude sugar syrup and the well-known and much-liked beverage "Aquan Diente."

The sugar cane by-products were transported to St. Augustine by means of a large barge, propelled with poles or oars manipulated by his slaves.

Burlow, like Gasparilla, fearing his safety and the safety of his wealth, carefully packed two immense watertight chests and summoned two Negro slaves to assist him in taking these most valuable packages to a place of safety. They were taken to Burlow Creek, put in a row boat, and, up or down the creek, these packages were gently submerged to the bottom of the stream. His task completed, but fearing the secret might be divulged if three were acquainted with the fact, he shot and killed both on the spot, thus leaving the secret to himself alone.

He didn't last long, for it is said the Seminoles paid him back in his own coin.

*Florida State University*

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Schoolcraft's Indian Legends.* Edited by MENTOR L. WILLIAMS. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1956. xxii, 322 pp. \$5.00.

There has always been some argument about the functions of the editor of a scholarly book and there is undoubtedly still debate about the exact definition of folklore, but in neither case will this book offend even the purist. In short, Professor Williams' book is a superb job of editing what is unchallengeably pure, if such an animal there be, folklore.

The modest title of the book, *Schoolcraft's Indian Legends*, only suggests the wealth of material packed between its covers. First, there is the complete body of legends which Schoolcraft published in 1839 as *Algic Researches*, complete with the author's notes and supplemented at strategic points by the editor's notes. The text of the *Algic Researches* occupies 238 pages and its reproduction would alone be enough for applause from the folklorist, for it has become something of a rare book. Professor Williams has already performed, then, one of the basic jobs of the editor; he has resurrected, annotated, and made available a trustworthy text.

Second, we are given, under the even more modest title of "Appendix A," 45 pages more of Indian tales and legends collected from such other works of Schoolcraft as *The Myth of Hiawatha* and *The Red Race of America*. This section, like the first, contains both author's and editor's notes, the latter particularly valuable in tracing the publication history of the tales as they appear under various titles in Schoolcraft's books. Thus, Professor Williams has again fulfilled the editor's duties by presenting peripheral material that adds to the completeness and clarity of the text. Above all, he has remained within the realm of "pure" folklore by scrupulously omitting anything that is not a myth or legend and not told as a narrative.

Third, Professor Williams has packed great riches in a small room under the innocuous label of "Appendix B," which contains among many other things a summary of the important evidence that should eternally lay to rest the old ghost that Longfellow depended on a Finnish epic rather than Schoolcraft's legends for *Hiawatha*. Here the edi-

tor has met and resolved, not evaded, some of the problems attached to his material.

Finally, Professor Williams has written an introduction to his text that could serve as a model for its kind. In 13 pages he surveys much of the background for a study of American Indian lore, manfully tries to clarify the main elements of the bewildering mythology of both the Iroquois and Algonquin nations, focuses the highlights of Schoolcraft's life and work, and fronts the charges that other scholars have made against Schoolcraft. The introduction serves to take the book out of the esoteric and makes it coherent to the interested general reader.

The temptation presents itself to end the review at this point, but the matter suggested above, that of "charges that other scholars have made against Schoolcraft," demands elaboration. These charges can be summarized as follows:

1. Schoolcraft's work as a collector was hurt by his changing of legends "to suit his own literary taste."
2. He distorted the legends by omitting or disguising offensive material.
3. He was responsible for the kind of public sentimentalizing of the Indian which resulted in innumerable "lovers' leaps."
4. He confused his audience and future scholars by interchanging the names of the Iroquois Hiawatha and the Algonquin Manabozho.

Professor Williams reviews each of these charges then refutes it, usually with strong evidence but occasionally with only strong assertion. For example, he effectively answers the first charge by pointing out that Schoolcraft was always at the mercy of his informants, the Johnston girls, who were half-Indian but also "gentle; secluded, and very Christian." However, the editor can only answer the second charge by stating emphatically that Schoolcraft might omit but would never alter. In the third indictment Professor Williams suggests Longfellow as the real culprit, for there simply are no tales of lovers' leaps or tragic romances in the Schoolcraft canon. Longfellow again comes a cropper in the fourth charge because although Schoolcraft did identify Hiawatha with Manabozho, he did it only after Longfellow had popularized the error in *Hiawatha*, and then only once in order "to get on the band-wagon."

Despite Professor Williams' heroic and successful editorship of this fine book, there is by his own admission still much to be done. He says, "There has been no effort to appraise or analyze the tales anthropo-

logically; this is a task for the professional." And even to the amateur it is obvious in reading the tales collected here that there are problems, the same that plague all folklorists. The legends in *Schoolcraft's Indian Legends* are told in smooth, polished, nineteenth-century literary prose, yet they contain the kind of *faits accomplis*, lapses in logic and time continuity, and gaucheries that we expect in the folklore of a primitive people. Yet again we are told by the editor's introduction and Schoolcraft's notes that these tales are the product of native story-tellers with such a high degree of skill and imagination that they were often able to deliberately use various levels of allegory and symbolism. Very well then, which is the form and which is the matter? If the manner of delivery is Schoolcraft's, and if in turn he received the tales already altered and purged of objectionable elements, just how much is left of what we call folklore?

Professor Williams has not provided us with all the answers, although he has helped us with many. It would be too much to expect of one editor in one book that he should have given us all, but we can at least thank him for giving us a solid place to begin.

SHELDON NORMAN GREBSTEIN

*University of Kentucky*

*The Tragic Days of Billy the Kid.* By FRAZIER HUNT. New York: Hastings House, 1956. 316 pp., no index. \$5.00.

Four years ago The University of New Mexico published J. C. Dykes' *Billy the Kid, The Bibliography of a Legend*. Mr. Dykes admitted that the 437 items annotated in his book did not include all that had been written or recorded about the subject.

Since that time the legend has continued to gain momentum. Just last year C. L. Sonnichsen and William V. Morrison collaborated upon *Alias Billy the Kid*, the story of one Brushy Bill Roberts, who claimed to be the Kid.

And now comes the latest book about the erstwhile New Mexico outlaw: Frazier Hunt's *The Tragic Days of Billy the Kid*. On its jacket blurb are such claims as the following:

And never before has there been brought into true focus the Lincoln County War. . . . The true character of the Kid seemed almost beyond reach. . . . In place of the former distorted figure of

legend, a young man of flesh and blood and heart emerges into clear perspective. So at last we have the real Billy the Kid — authentic, true — and completely accountable.

In composing this book, author Hunt benefitted from the invaluable aid of Lt. Col. Maurice G. Fulton, a professor of English at New Mexico Military Institute and a scholar who had for thirty years before his death in 1955 been a diligent researcher concerning the Lincoln County war involving the Kid. Hunt himself spent ten years of his own in additional research, both first-hand and secondary. Anyone who reads the book will not doubt the authenticity and the value of the documentary evidence in it. Anyone will appreciate the extent to which the author went into detail in presenting explicit and complete capsule biographies of the many persons even casually connected with the Lincoln County vendetta. Anyone can better visualize actual physical happenings because of the intermittent drawings, diagrams, and maps of the areas involved, showing the buildings, routes, and features of terrain. In places, it is almost as if a movie scenario writer is at work.

No one will doubt author Hunt's untiring and avid search for the facts about the Kid's life. Many will be surprised to find factual evidence refuting what has been considered as fact. Many will be surprised to learn of all the implications and ramifications of the conflict in Lincoln County of the late 1870's, and of their magnitude and far-reaching effect. Some readers, however, especially those with the totally unbiased attitude of true scientific researchers, may wish to reserve some measure of doubt concerning Hunt's inferences, deductions, and character analyses.

Off hand, I would say that Frazier Hunt is roughly 65% objective and 35% subjective in his analyses of the characters in his book. He is certainly pro-Kid. Throughout the book he exonerates the Kid, he makes the Chisum-Tunstall-McSween faction the right side, and he blames the Murphy-Riley-Dolan faction as the wrong side. Though a rare, exceptional grayish character delineation finds its way into Hunt's picture, most of them are either all black or all white. He censures the members of the political "Ring" backing the Kid's enemies: people such as Governor Axtell, Prosecuting Attorney Rynerson, Sheriffs Brady and Péppin, and Colonel Dudley. Furthermore, his very descriptive adjectives are fully charged with emotion. Buckshot Roberts, a gun-slinging enemy of the Kid, is an "old reprobate . . . an old rattlesnake." Billy's bitter prosecutor, Colonel Rynerson, is a "harsh and crooked justice . . . roaring, ill-tempered giant, with his great, hairy

paws and his exaggerated sense of his own importance . . . this hard, unconscionable man." Colonel Dudley is just short of having horns, cloven hoofs, and a tail. If the reader is not careful, he will visualize his blue U. S. Army uniform as Satanic red flannel.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the Kid seems in places to be a cheerful cherub; in others he is the knight errant. One wonders, at times, when reading the book, whether Hunt first adopted the thesis that the Kid was all virtuous and heroic and then adapted what he found to that thesis or whether he employed the opposite tactics of finding what he could,

<sup>1</sup>Doubtless the frontier Army was far from perfect, but one wonders whether Hunt is entirely impartial in the unholy light he casts upon it. The Army shows up much better in books by frontier officers such as Eugene Bandel, Randolph B. Marcy, Richard Irving Dodge, John G. Bourke, James W. Abert, and Philip St. George Cooke. These books have the ring of truth.

arranging the ledger in columns of "pro" and "con," and *then* analyzing. In a way, Hunt defeats his avowed purpose. He set out at the beginning to debunk the sentimentally romantic legend of the Kid set going by the outlaw's original chronicler and personal friend, Ash Upson. He quotes Upson:

Bold, daring and reckless, he [the Kid] was open-handed, generous-hearted, frank and manly. He was a favorite of all classes and ages; especially was he loved and admired by the old and decrepit, and the young and helpless. To such, he was a champion, a defender, a right arm. . . .

One hundred and fourteen pages later, Hunt's own words are not much different:

To himself and to these gentle, uncomplaining natives he had become a champion, a bright, smiling symbol of revolt lighting up their own dreary and eternal struggles with life. He was a true part of this lonely, mystical land and these neglected people. And he was touched by their overpowering sense of God's will, their ageless acceptance of destiny. He was their happy warrior, for these were his people and here was his land. . . .

Hunt concludes that the Kid was a romantic idealist. I suspect that Hunt himself is in large percentage the romantic idealist, reading much altruism into the motives he ascribes to the Kid. Billy is another Robin Hood, Lincoln County is another Sherwood Forest, and there are several Sheriffs of Nottingham. Instead of squelching the legend, Hunt has added to it.

But Hunt is not to be blamed for this. It is almost impossible, apparently, to write about Billy the Kid without getting enthusiastic if not being carried away. The things seen and the eye that sees are rarely identical in aspect. Ash Upson got carried away with the subject. So did Walter Noble Burns. It was even more probable that Hunt would succumb. Distance and consecration lend romance. With the accumulation of forty years of research into the subject, anyone would naturally become absorbed with it at the expense of objectivity. Marshall Fishwick called Billy the Kid the Faust of America (*Saturday Review*, October 11, 1952). In due time he will probably be called the Hamlet or the Oedipus of America. It is conceivable (though incredible at this point) that finally the legend of the Kid will be THE EPIC of America.

Perhaps, after all, it really matters not so much *now* what the real Billy the Kid was like *then*. For our own purposes we need both historian and poet to portray his character. As a finder of facts, Frazier Hunt is an historian; as a portrayer of character, he is a poet. He may have captured what we need as the essence of the Kid. Maybe we, too, need to be "pro-Kid."

It will do no harm to suggest in closing, however, that someone equally as diligent as Hunt and firmly determined to justify the Murphy-Riley-Dolan faction might compose a book that would make an interesting companion to the one here reviewed.

GEORGE D. HENDRICKS

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*The Virginia Tradition.* By MARSHALL W. FISHWICK. Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, 1956. 111 pp., notes, index. \$2.50.

It is a quibble to say that Dr. Fishwick studies not one but several Virginia traditions in this short work. His definition is good: "Tradition is the distilled essence of man's accumulated experience." The main theme of the book is to suggest that Virginia is the most conservative and traditional of the states by an expatiation upon some of its cherished traditions.

Most of the traditions of the state have been lingered over and preserved in the literature about Virginia usually written by Virginians. The old romance of John Smith and Pocahontas cannot be encroached

upon without an army of Virginians rising in protest. The books of Scott and Cooper set the pattern for traditional romancers — Tucker, Kennedy, Carruthers, Cook, Page, Cabell, Glasgow — in depicting the good old days in Virginia.

Some of the specific traditions preserved in reality and in literature are: (1) the concept of the gentleman. From colonial days to the present Virginia has been close to the Mother Country and has kept before its youth the qualities of the gentleman and the Cavalier. Students in the University of Virginia have always been and continue to be called Cavaliers; (2) the tradition of horse breeding and racing. The state for years led the nation in this gentlemanly art and although first place in the endeavor has passed to sister states, still Virginia spends a great deal of time and money in horsemanship, even in the fine art of hunting over the rolling land with good steeds and packs of pedigreed hounds. The idol of the land "since the Wah" has been General Lee's fine charger, Traveller, now mounted in a glass case in the Chapel of Washington and Lee University.

Each section of the state has its own traditional motifs. The Tidewater is expending vast amounts of money to restore Williamsburg, to preserve the homes of its great leaders and its many battlegrounds, and to stage the patriotic pageant, *The Common Glory*. The Valley of Virginia is proud of its natural wonders, its clean farms, farmhouses and barns, and other rural motifs. And the Mountains are doing their share by participating in traditional dances, ballads, handicrafts, and other pioneer and frontier customs. Two statewide movements are even now helping to transform the state into a national showplace — the returning to log cabin homes and the making of small state parks and shrines, and the erection of countless roadside signs to "mark the spot" of some historical event.

All this preservation of course is not folklore and the study is not a sourcebook for the folklorist. The author, a historian, is looking at his state and its people, their customs and traditions and explaining to the general reader why Virginia is not a hustling industrial region, but is instead a state of old folkways and traditions. The book is valuable to the folklorist who is interested in the larger currents of tradition in America, their sources, scope, and imprint upon the people of a region.

LEONARD W. ROBERTS

*Union College  
Barbourville, Kentucky*

*Negro Folktales in Michigan*. Collected and edited by RICHARD M. DORSON. Cambridge: Harvard University press, 1956. xvi, 248 pp. \$4.75.

This admirable book is a Koh-i-noor among American folktale collections, sound, efficient, and obviously built on wide knowledge and sure grasp. Frankly non-definitive in the area of its title, its 165 tales are intrinsically so readable, so well-chosen from among many others collected by the author, and so illuminatingly fitted into the known folklore tradition in America, that a satisfying effect of solidity is achieved.

The career of Richard M. Dorson, familiar to his fellow folklorists, is after all after forty years of life merely on its threshold. Suffice it to say here that this is his sixth book, that his doctor's degree is from Harvard, and that he is at present Associate Professor of History at Michigan State University.

To collect the materials for *Negro Folktales in Michigan* Dr. Dorson penetrated into an unprepossessing part of the state, a section inhabited largely by Negro immigrants from every state in the South. "These plantation folk were richly endowed in cultural tradition; their vibrancy and animation contrasted curiously with the general listlessness and business obsession of the old Northerners." This quotation is from one of the most valuable parts of the book, Chapter 1, which describes the author's sometimes disheartening attempts to find yarnspinners and then intimately characterizes them. Photographs help. Chapter 2 is on "The Art of Negro Storytelling"; the tales themselves follow in eleven categories; finally are Bibliography and Notes, an Index of Informants, Index of Motifs, and Index of Tale Types.

Cacography is gratefully kept to an absolute minimum, except for such slips as "Philadelfy" (page 87). Most of the stories read nearly as easily as they must have sounded or as if they had been composed for the printed page. In one instance, however, the doctrinal avoidance of apostrophes led into trouble—"hant" and "hanted" are not in the dictionary. On this subject, one reader at least is unfamiliar with the term "toastie." The occasional use by these taletellers of "literary" terms was revelatory: "betrayed," "inch" (verb), "insane," "extricating," "Crumbed" (not "crumbled"), "imprisonment" and "forfeited."

Typographically the book is excellent. Only at the top of page 69 does any serious mistake occur, apparently a wrong line or two. Other

errors, on pages 74, 141, 189, and 222, all involve omitted quotation marks.

The technique and format of *Negro Folktales in Michigan* may well serve as models for any conceivable similar projects. It adequately illustrates its thesis as stated on page 187: "United States Negro tales form a distinct repertoire, separate from the narratives of West Africa, the West Indies, Europe, the British Isles, and white America. Southern Negroes have drawn upon all these lores, and added materials from their own environment and experience to produce a richly diversified and culturally independent folk tradition."

GEORGE W. BOSWELL

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